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Science takes inner look at road ahead

By FRED MCGEHAN

Of Our Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — American scientists are beginning to look at themselves in the mirror and aren't necessarily pleased with what they find.

The reflection is that of a steely cold professional with little spark of human warmth.

In effect they are discovering that the human being behind the laboratory apron has all too often been forgotten and—more importantly—that the sterile confines of a lab or test chamber are not a license to retire from the world.

This reappraisal agonizing in its execution and far-reaching in its implications, was the most significant development to come out of a recent meeting of 7,000 leading U.S. scientists here.

That the scientific community is disturbed was plainly shown by the theme it chose: "How Man Has Changed His Planet."

Sharp Probing

This could have been a springboard for syrupy self-congratulation. Instead it was a sharp probing of the long-range consequences of scientific discovery on all mankind.

This represents a clear change.

Individuals and small scientific groups have carried the social and ethical banner in the past but there has been little rallying around their flags.

The most notable example has been Nobel-laureate Dr. Linus Pauling who has opposed con-

It was significant then, that the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) the biggest and most representative body of the nation's scientists, closed its annual meeting with a resolution to probe the effects that chemical and biological agents are having on the environment.

Watered Down

The resolution was initiated by several concerned scientists who wanted the AAAS to condemn the use of chemical and biological warfare in Vietnam.

After opposing political views and the conservative bent of the AAAS were taken into consideration, the resolution was changed to delete all references to Vietnam. It was also broadened to include all forms of environmental poisoning — from air-polluting smokestacks to chemical defoliating agents.

While the most significant action of the week-long meeting, its thrust was paralleled in numerous discussions on the scientist's role in the human community.

Scientists fretted over such things as unforeseen consequences of dabbling with the weather and the propriety of participation in secret Central Intelligence Agency gumshoe operations.

Ethical Questions

Not by coincidence, the AAAS study committee on ethics and responsibilities of scientists presented a 'profile of concern'—a sampling of 1,000 members on social and ethical questions.

Perhaps the most succinct call
Dr.
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